I negate. The resolution posits a prohibition on the way one polity may act towards another. Thus, the affirmative has a burden to demonstrate that people have a moral obligation to restrain their actions with regards to those in another nation. Otherwise there would be no restrictions on the manner or reasons for a nation to refrain from trading, and economic sanctions would be permissible.

A moral theory must not only say what is wrong, but also prohibit us from doing what is wrong. Without such prescriptive implications labeling an act immoral does not imply that we must actually restrain our actions, and so would fail to effectively generate prohibitions. Thus, I value **moral obligation**. Morality can only obligate us if it is derived from principles that we would willingly accept: we act morally because recognize that we are better off for morality’s existence. Otherwise we may rationally conclude that morality ought play no role in our lives, and it could not truly obligate us. This implies a contractarian morality that derives principles of mutual restraint from individuals’ self-interest. David Gauthier 1[[1]](#footnote-2) writes,

**“Moral principles are introduced as the objects of** full voluntary ex ante **agreement among** rational **persons. Such agreement is hypothetical, in supposing a pre-moral context for the adoption of moral rules** and practices**. But the parties to agreement are real, determinate individuals, distinguished by their** capacities, **situations, and concerns. In so far as they would agree to constraints on their choices,** restraining their pursuit of their own interests, **they acknowledge a distinction between what they may and may not do. As rational persons understanding the structure of their interaction, they recognize a place for mutual constraint, and so for a moral dimension in their affairs”**

Moreover, no non-contractarian theory of morality can derive moral principles without presupposing their existence. Thus, only contractarianism’s foundation in the empirical fact that individuals have desires that they rationally pursue provides a non-circular origin for morality. Gauthier 2 confirms,

**“A contractarian theory of morals**, developed as part of the theory of rational choice, has evident strengths. It enables us to **demonstrate[s] the rationality of impartial constraints on the pursuit of individual interest to persons who may take no interest in others' interests. Morality is thus given a** sure **grounding in a** weakand widely accepted **conception of practical rationality. No alternative account of morality accomplishes this. Those who claim that moral principles are objects of rational choice in special circumstances fail to establish the rationality of actual compliance with these principles.** Those who claim **to establish the rationality of such compliance appeal[s] to a** strong and controversial **conception of reason that** seems to **incorporate[s] prior moral suppositions. No alternative account generates morals, as a rational constraint** on choice and action, **from a** non-moral, or **morally neutral, base.”**

Thus, the criterion is **consistency with** **a contractarian system of mutual restraint:** defined as those principles that self-interested individuals would allow to constrain their actions, with the belief that doing so would serve their self-interest. I contend that a prohibition on the use of economic sanctions cannot be derived from such a system.

**First,** the anarchic international arena is not conducive to cooperative relationships. Absent the predictability provided by a sovereign, it is not in an actor’s best interest to depend on mutual restraint, and so no contractarian restrictions on autonomy can be justified. Thomas Nagel[[2]](#footnote-3) writes,

But the same need for assurance is present if one construes the principles of justice differently, and attributes to individuals a non–self interested motive that leads them to want to live on fair terms of some kind with other people. Even if justice is taken to include not only collective self-interest but also the elimination of morally arbitrary inequalities, or the protection of rights to liberty, **the existence of a just order** still **depends on consistent patterns of conduct** and persisting institutions that have a pervasive effect on the shape of people’s lives**. Separate individuals,** however attached to such an ideal, **have no motive,** or even opportunity, **to conform to such patterns or institutions on their own, without the assurance that their conduct will** in fact **be part of a reliable** and effective **system. The only way to provide that assurance is through some form of law, with centralized authority to determine the rules and a centralized monopoly of the power of enforcement. This is needed** even in a community most of whose members are attached to a common ideal of justice, **both in order to provide terms of coordination and because it doesn’t take many defectors to make such a system unravel. The kind of all-encompassing collective practice** or institution **that is capable of being just** in the primary sense **can exist only under sovereign government.** It is only the operation of such a system that one can judge to be just or unjust.

***Second,*** *contractarianism cannot ban practices outside of a context of mutual benefit. Gauthier 3 explains,*

*But the strengths of a contractarian theory may seem to be accompanied by grave weaknesses. We have already noted that for* ***a contractarian****, morality requires a context of mutual benefit. John Locke held that 'an Hobbist . . . will not easily admit a great many plain duties of morality'. And this may seem equally to apply to the Hobbist's modern-day successor. Our theory* ***does not assume any fundamental concern with impartiality, but only a concern derivative from the benefits of agreement, and those benefits are determined by the effect that each person can have on the interests of her fellows. Only beings whose*** *physical and mental* ***capacities are*** *either* ***roughly equal*** *or mutually complementary* ***can expect to find cooperation beneficial*** *to all.**Humans benefit from their interaction with horses, but they do not co-operate with horses and may not benefit them.* ***Among unequals, one party may benefit most by coercing the other, and on our theory would have no reason to refrain.*** *We may condemn all coercive relationships, but* ***only within the context of mutual benefit can our condemnation appeal to a rationally grounded morality.***

*Economic sanctions can only be a tool of coercion if one country is much more powerful than the other. This is empirically verified: countries with more than 50 times the GDP of the target enact the majority of sanctions[[3]](#footnote-4). Such a power imbalance undermines the necessity of mutual restraint, and so economic sanctions cannot be condemned by a contractarian morality.* **A/T restraint is good even without reciprocity**

It is not rational to comply with a cooperative system solely because it is beneficial, unless it is also reciprocal in nature. Gauthier (\_) writes,

**“**But **broad compliance is not a rational disposition for utility-maximizers.** Not only does **a broadly compliant person invite[s] others to take advantage of her in setting terms of co-operation**, but if some persons are broadly compliant, then others, interacting with them, will find it advantageous not to be broadly, or even so much as narrowly, compliant. **If you will comply for any benefit whatsoever, then in interacting with you I should dispose myself to comply with a joint strategy only if it offers me, not a fair share, but the lion’s share of the co-operative surplus. So it is not and cannot be rational for everyone to be disposed to broad compliance. But since no one chooses to constrain his behavior for its own sake, no person finds it rational to be more compliant than his fellows.** Equal rationality demands equal compliance. **Since broad compliance is not rational for everyone, it is not rational for anyone.”**

**A/T we should rationally agree to utilitarianism**

Each individual has his own unique set of desires and characteristics, and so would not recognize overall preference fulfillment as a justification for forfeiting his own self-interested pursuits. People would not voluntarily become tools for utilitarianism. Gauthier (\_) writes,

**“**Each person, aware of his identity, must be able to identify with choice from the Archimedean point, as the choice he would have made under the conditions of ideal agency. For **a choice is rational only to those who identify with it, and impartial only if all are able to identify with it. But the choice required by** average **utilitarianism affords no basis for this identification.**  John Rawls has stated, ‘Utilitarianism does not take seriously the distinction between persons.’ We agree, but even more, utilitarianism does not take seriously the individuality of persons. Our objection is not so much that the utility of one person may be sacrificed to that of others, but that **each person is treated as a means to overall preference fulfillment. Utilitarianism violates the integrity of the individual as a being with his own distinctive capacities and preferences, and so a distinctive utility, not interchangeable with the utilities of others, that he seeks to maximize.”**

**A/T for morality we should be ignorant of our position (Kantian view of man)**

Rationality must be from the perspective of a particular person, not the universal application of a-priori principles to an abstracted entity. Gauthier (\_) writes,

**“**Here we proceed in a manner quite different from Rawls. For in his argument **the** epistemic **effect of ignorance of one’s identity has an ontological significance** quite **incompatible with conceiving persons as actors.** Rawls is led to **the Kantian view [is] that apart from each person’s contingent self he has a real self,** the moral person **defined by a concern with justice and** the good, and that this real self is the proper subject of all moral choice. This real self, which alone escapes the nexus of social determination, **is revealed by removing all knowledge of the contingent features of individual identity. But we deny that there is such a ‘real self’. A person’s identity is in all respects a contingent matter. But this contingency is not morally arbitrary, for morality is and can be found only in the interaction of real persons individuated by their capacities, attitudes, and preferences.”**

1. Gauthier, David P. *Morals by Agreement*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986. Print. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. “The Problem of Global Justice”, 2005 by Blackwell Publishing, Inc. Philosophy & Public Affairs 33, no. 2. http://as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/1172/globaljustice.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Lance Davis and Stanley Engerman The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring, 2003), pp. 187-197: “In the 115 cases of economic sanctions deployed since 1914 that were investigated by Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott (1990, p. 63), the GNP of the sender (or principal initiator) of sanctions was nearly always over ten times that of the target and in the majority of cases more than 50 times greater.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)